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ABSTRACT

The Basic English Skills Test and its supplement (Best Plus Supplement), a structured oral interview, were administered to 72 of 119 limited English proficient 12th grade students in the Dade County (Florida) Public Schools, to determine their oral proficiency. The students were native speakers of Haitian-Creole, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Oral proficiency was also rated by teachers from their English for Speakers of Other Languages classes. The teachers also rated a comparison group of 29 students who had already completed the course. Thirteen students were retested to determine interrater reliability and test validity. Of the 72 tested students, 62% had good to excellent oral proficiency; 76% of the students who had completed classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages were rated good to excellent. However, the latter group required an average of only 4.5 semester credits to exit the classes; the 12th graders being tested had already completed an average of 6 semester credits. Length of residence in the United States was not related to the oral proficiency scores. Both the students and teachers participating in the testing found the experience positive and valuable. (Appendices include the questionnaires administered to students and to teachers). (MGD)

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Table of Contents

	Page
Executive Summary	i
Introduction	1
Plan for Assessing Students' Oral Proficiency	1
Procedures	2
Sample Selection	2
Instruments	3
Validity and Reliability Estimates of the Oral Tests	5
Testers	7
Data Collection	7
Results	8
Cutoff Score for Oral Language Proficiency	8
Oral Proficiency of Students Tested	10
Assessment of the Oral Test Experience	13
Conclusions	14
Recommendations	15
References	17

Appendices

A.	Tables	18
B.	Description of ESOL Levels - Areas of Functioning in English	39
C.	B.E.S.T. Core Section Content Outline	40
D.	Oral Supplement Content Outline	41
E.	Description of Oral Proficiency Ratings	42
F.	Student Assessment of the Oral Test	43
G.	ESOL Teacher (Tester) Assessment of Oral Test/Training	44

EVALUATION OF THE ENGLISH ORAL FLUENCY OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT TWELFTH GRADE STUDENTS

Dade County Public Schools
Office of Educational Accountability
1410 NE Second Avenue
Miami, Florida 33132
August, 1984

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the English oral language proficiency of twelfth grade limited English proficient (LEP) students who were graduating in Dade County Public Schools. The evaluation was requested by the School Board, after concern had been expressed regarding the ability of these students to communicate effectively in college or on the job. While the ultimate goal for LEP students is oral fluency equal to a native speaker of English, there are presently no state or district requirements for these students to demonstrate oral proficiency in order to graduate from high school. This study examined the oral proficiency of current LEP twelfth graders. It is anticipated that the findings of the report, and the procedures followed, will be used in the long-range plan for establishing oral English proficiency criteria for future twelfth grade limited English proficient students. In addition, the results will form the basis for evaluating language proficiency of LEP students in all grades, and aid in establishing criteria for exiting these students from English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes.

Evaluation Plan

The question addressed by this evaluation was "What is the English oral proficiency of twelfth grade limited English proficient students?" In an attempt to answer the question, the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement, a structured interview test of oral language skills, was administered in May to 72 randomly selected twelfth grade LEP students, of the 119 who were eligible to graduate in 1984. Independent oral proficiency ratings were also obtained for each student from their ESOL teachers.

Oral testing was conducted by a team of ten experienced ESOL teachers, who were trained in the oral interview and scoring procedures by OEA staff. In addition to the 72 LEP students tested, 29 randomly selected students who had exited from ESOL classes within the past twelve months were tested, as one of the criterion measures for the oral test. Oral proficiency ratings were also obtained for those students, but from their English teachers. Finally, a third random sample of 13 students was retested, to determine interrater reliability.

Not directly related to the questions of the study, but nonetheless of more than marginal importance, are 1) the attitude of the examinees toward the oral interview testing procedure, and 2) the comments and other feedback of the testers toward the training and test itself. This information was also obtained.

A multiple classification scheme (MCS) for establishing cutoff scores on language proficiency tests (Brière and Hinofotis, 1979), plus teacher ratings, were employed in setting the criterion, or cutoff score, for oral proficiency. The cutoff score was 76. If a student achieved this score or better, he/she generally has good to excellent control of basic grammar, and can effectively converse with native English speakers in most school, job or social situations, with occasional hesitancy. Although the student may have a foreign accent, he/she is usually intelligible.

Descriptions of students' oral proficiency are those used in the Oral Proficiency Rating Scale, adapted by OEA staff for this study from Educational Testing Service and Foreign Service Institute scales.

Conclusions

The conclusions which emerged from the findings were as follows:

1. ***Sixty-two percent of the LEP students tested have good-to-excellent oral proficiency.*** These students can converse through extended discourse, and respond to and ask questions, with little hesitation, on a variety of topics related to school, home, job and social situations. They can retell the key events of a standard newspaper item or multi-paragraph essay. These students achieved the cutoff score of 76 or above on the oral test, with a mean score of 86.

2. ***Thirty-eight percent of the LEP students have poor-to-fair oral proficiency.*** In general, those students can respond to and ask questions using simple structures, and discuss topics related to school, home, job and social situations with more frequent hesitations, at slightly beyond the survival level. They can retell some, or half of the key events presented in a standard newspaper item or multi-paragraph essay. These students scored below the cutoff score of 76; the mean score was 60.

3. ***Seventy-six percent of the Exited-ESOL students tested, or those who had exited within the past year, have good-to-excellent oral proficiency.*** These students achieved the cutoff score of 76 or above on the oral test. Only 24% of exited students achieved a score below the cutoff. The mean for the students with good-to-excellent oral proficiency was quite good: 89, approximating the proficiency of native speakers who score 100 on the test. This high achievement further supports the use of Exited-ESOL students as one of the criterion measures of oral fluency in this study.

4. ***There was no relationship between the length of time students had been in the United States and their oral proficiency scores, for either LEP or Exited-ESOL students.*** However, an analysis of the number of semester credits in ESOL taken by the students showed a difference of 1.5 credits, or approximately one and a half semesters, between LEP and Exited-ESOL students. (A semester credit is based on an hour of ESOL instruction per day). The LEP students had taken an average of 6.0 semester credits, the Exited-ESOL, 4.5 semester credits. It appears that the LEP students in this evaluation were experiencing more difficulty in learning English than their peers, and required additional ESOL instruction. Further study of factors affecting students' oral proficiency is needed.

5. ***Although the formal oral English test was a new experience, it was rated by the students as positive and valuable.***

6. ***The team of ESOL teachers, who served as testers, gave positive ratings to both the training they received in administering and scoring the oral test, and the test itself.*** All of the teachers stated that the test would be a valuable aid in assessing the oral proficiency of ESOL students.

Recommendations

The major recommendations indicated by the study are:

1. Future evaluations of LEP students in ESOL programs should examine the factors which contribute significantly to students' acquisition of English in the most effective, rapid and cost-efficient way. Oral testing of individual students appears to be a viable method of determining oral English fluency, and should be one of the measures used.

2. Oral proficiency, although important, is only one measure of a student's abilities in a second language. A complete assessment of a student's total language abilities should address reading, writing and cultural dimensions as well. Other factors, such as grades, exposure/contact to the second language outside of school, motivation and teacher judgment, in the form of a "profile," should also be included in the long-range plan for establishing English proficiency criteria for 12th grade ESOL students.

EVALUATION OF THE ENGLISH ORAL FLUENCY OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT TWELFTH GRADE STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Dade County Public School student population presently includes 24,304 limited English proficient (LEP) students. While the majority of these students are concentrated at the elementary school level, 6,087 are enrolled in secondary schools, and 132 are in the twelfth grade. Students classified as limited English proficient are enrolled in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. Although all students who lack proficiency in English face hardships in adjusting to a curriculum taught in English, the problem is more severe for those in the senior high school. These students must pass standardized written tests (SSAT, Part II), and fulfill basic course requirements, before they can graduate. For many students who arrive in this country at age sixteen, this means learning English and content subjects simultaneously, within two years. Some students may have to remain in high school well beyond age eighteen; others opt to attend adult education classes.

While the optimum, long-range goal for LEP students is oral fluency equal to a native speaker of English, there are presently no requirements for these students to demonstrate oral proficiency in order to graduate from high school. However, concern has been growing among educators and the Dade County School Board that there may be students graduating who are incapable of functioning effectively in college or on the job because of their inability to express themselves adequately in English. At the School Board meeting of February 22, 1984, the Board directed staff to determine the extent to which limited proficient students graduate from grade 12 in Dade County Public Schools without having fluency in English. The purpose of this report is to present the results of a study designed to assess the oral fluency of twelfth grade students who have been certified as eligible to graduate in 1984, and who were enrolled in ESOL classes.

PLAN FOR ASSESSING STUDENTS' ORAL PROFICIENCY

In response to the Board's directive, the Office of Educational Accountability (OEA) developed a plan for assessing LEP students' oral proficiency. The plan was implemented by OEA staff, in cooperation with Division of Elementary and Secondary Instruction and area staff, during April - June, 1984, as follows:

A sample of twelfth grade students currently enrolled in ESOL and eligible for graduation was identified. An oral proficiency test was administered to these students on an individual basis. The instrument used was the Basic English Skills Test (B.E.S.T.), developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics; plus a supplement developed by OEA staff. Testing of students was conducted in May, 1984, by secondary school ESOL teachers trained in the administration and scoring of the oral test. The test was also administered to a second sample of students who had exited ESOL within the past year, as one of the criterion measures of fluency to be used. A third sample of all students tested was retested to determine interrater reliability, a necessary procedure in oral language testing.

Students enrolled in ESOL classes are classified as to general levels of functioning in English, from "Non-independent" (Level 1), through "Independent"

(Level 5). These classifications are based on scores achieved on the Dade County Secondary Placement Test, which tests language features through a listening comprehension and written multiple choice format, but which does not measure directly oral proficiency; and on ESOL teacher judgement. In order to have a direct measure of the skill being assessed, speaking, an oral proficiency rating scale was developed and independent ratings were obtained for the students in four oral language categories: listening comprehension, communication, fluency and pronunciation. The rating scale was adapted by OEA staff from the validated six-point scale used by the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) for nearly twenty years, and which is currently used in determing the oral proficiency of secondary school students learning a foreign language (Clark, 1978; ETS, 1982). Ratings were obtained for LEP students from their ESOL teachers, and for Exited-ESOL students from their English teachers.

Using the oral proficiency rating score which indicates minimum school, job and social proficiency as a standard, LEP students were placed into two groups: high (at or above the standard) and low (below the standard). Students' means and standard deviations on the oral test (B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement) in each group were then used in the multiple classification scheme, a statistical procedure for establishing cutoff scores on language proficiency tests; the criterion test score was then determined. Thus, the ratings served as predictors in setting the criterion test score for oral proficiency.

Specific procedures, instrumentation and results of the study are presented below. Recommendations for future oral proficiency testing of twelfth grade LEP students, based on the findings of this report, are also included.

PROCEDURES

Sample Selection

Each high school was requested to identify the twelfth grade students currently enrolled in ESOL classes, and those who had exited ESOL within the past twelve months. In addition, schools were asked to indicate which of the students were eligible for graduation in 1984.

Table 1 (Appendix A), presents the distribution of twelfth grade students enrolled in ESOL classes by school and ESOL classification. These students are referred to as LEP (limited or less than English proficient) in this report. A total of 119 LEP students was identified as eligible for graduation.

The distribution by school of 224 twelfth grade students graduating in 1984, who had exited ESOL within the past twelve months, or since June, 1983, is also shown in Table 1. These students will be referred to as Exited-ESOL.

Students reported as enrolled in exceptional education, failing twelfth grade, or not graduating until January, 1985, were not included in the study.

The students' classifications, or levels of functioning in English, ranged from Levels 1, "Non-Independent" (one student), to Level 4 (High-Intermediate). (A description of ESOL classifications is presented in Appendix B).

Fourteen schools were included in the evaluation, using a stratified random sampling procedure. Those schools with fewer than a combined total of 10 LEP and Exited-ESOL students were excluded, due to testing condition limitations, e.g., the number of testers available, the two-day testing period, and distances between schools. The schools included in the sample are representative

of all the senior high schools in the county where limited English proficient students are taught. These schools serve diverse language minority and socio-economic communities, as indicated by the percent of students eligible for free/reduced priced lunch, and percent of LEP students, shown in Table 2.

A stratified random sample of 60% of the twelfth grade LEP students identified as eligible to graduate was selected for oral proficiency testing. A second random sample of 13% of the twelfth grade students who had exited ESOL within the last twelve months was also selected, to obtain criterion related validity for the instruments used. Finally, a random sample of 13% of all students tested was selected for retesting by a second tester to determine interrater reliability. Summary data for the students and schools randomly selected for the evaluation are shown in Table 3.

Table 4 presents the composition of the final sample of all twelfth grade students tested by school, ESOL classification and Exited-ESOL status. In total, 72 LEP students and 29 Exited-ESOL students were tested. The distribution of the 13 students who were retested to establish interrater reliability is also shown in this table.

The students taking part in this evaluation immigrated from 16 countries and are native speakers of three languages (Haitian-Creole, Spanish and Vietnamese). As shown in Table 5, 50 of the students are originally from Cuba; however, there are many students from other Spanish speaking countries. For 90% of the sample, the home language is Spanish.

Instruments

Proficiency in a second or foreign language may be described as having a high degree of mastery of the three major components of language, syntax, vocabulary and sound system, so that effective communication can take place. The four fundamental skills by which communication is realized are listening (understanding), speaking, reading and writing. Proficiency in one of these skills does not necessarily entail proficiency in the other (Stansfield, 1981). It is possible for one to be able to have well-developed listening skills only, listening and speaking skills only, reading skills only, reading and writing skills only, or any combination of these. Thus any assessment of general language proficiency usually measures the student's performance in each of these skills.

The evaluation of oral language proficiency of limited English proficiency students in secondary schools has only recently received attention in the ESOL or bilingual education profession. While there are a number of standardized instruments and procedures for assessing oral proficiency in post-secondary institutions (e.g., the Test of Spoken English, the Foreign Service Institute test and rating scales, etc.), there is a limited number of such instruments for use in secondary schools. Of the major instruments available, norms for classifying students as to their level of oral proficiency in English are either inadequate or not yet developed (Ramirez et al., 1982; David Hiple, ACTFL, personal communication, April, 1984). At present, at least two states are reported to be seeking appropriate oral proficiency tests and norms for high school ESOL students, as well as for foreign language students. This surge of interest may be due to recent large influxes of refugees into this country, from Asia, Central and South America, Caribbean countries, and Mexico; and a concomitant recognition in the profession that the kind of fluency needed for successful communication for one age group may not be appropriate for another.

Two types of tests are generally employed in examining oral language proficiency: "discrete point" and "integrative." Discrete point tests assemble units of language - e.g., phonemes, word endings, syntatic patterns, language functions, etc., and tests these individually. Integrative or global tests combine numerous units of language into a single task. Examples of integrative oral test items are answering questions, describing objects or pictures, story telling, or story retelling. Many language assessment researchers feel that integrative tests have greater validity than discrete item tests, as more language units are sampled.

Integrative tests have two formats. In the first, structured communication, students respond to specific questions and demonstrate their ability to use language in a pragmatic way. In the second format, nonstructured communication, a conversation takes place between the examiner and the student, concerning a variety of topics and situations. Because non-structured oral proficiency tests generally involve extensive training of the examiner, and have a complex scoring system, the structured communication test appears to be the more practical instrument, if it contains a valid sample of the language tasks it is designed to assess.

The Basic English Skills Test (B.E.S.T.), a direct measure of oral proficiency and an integrative test with a structured communication format, was selected for this evaluation.

The Basic English Skills Test Plus Supplement

The instrument used to evaluate the oral proficiency of the LEP students was the Basic English Skills Test (B.E.S.T.), (Center for Applied Linguistics, 1982) Plus Supplement. Four oral language proficiency instruments were field-tested by OEA staff; the B.E.S.T. was selected for its ease of administration and scoring, as well as its ability to discriminate different ranges of oral proficiency. The B.E.S.T. is a competency-based test of English language proficiency which uses the individual structured oral interview method. It has been successfully used in determining proficiency levels of limited English speaking students, ages 16 and up. Developed for ESOL refugee populations, the B.E.S.T. yields separate scores for listening comprehension, communication, pronunciation, fluency and sight-word reading. Minimal training (one to two days) is needed to administer the test; it is easy to score.

The content-of-sample on the B.E.S.T. is fairly limited to survival level English; therefore, an oral supplement was added to the Core section of the test to provide a more accurate sample of linguistic and communicative competence. This oral supplement was developed by OEA staff. It consists of two brief additional measures of oral proficiency: anecdote retelling and responses to school, social and job-related situations. A summary of the content of the B.E.S.T. and the Supplement is shown in Appendices C and D. Both the B.E.S.T. and Supplement were field-tested in three high schools; modifications of the Supplement were subsequently made.

Oral Language Proficiency Rating Scale

The oral proficiency rating scale was developed by OEA staff for this evaluation to provide an independent assessment of the students' oral language abilities which were measured by the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement. The rating scale, shown in Appendix E, was adapted from the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) absolute language proficiency rating scales for speaking. These scales are

commonly used to describe secondary school and post-secondary school students' proficiency in a foreign language, e.g., French, German, Spanish, etc. Unlike academic grades, which measure achievement in mastering the content of a prescribed course, the rating for speaking proficiency is based on the absolute criterion of the command of an educated native speaker of the language.

The scale used in this evaluation defines oral language proficiency on a continuum of six levels of ability, ranging from "No Proficiency" through "Full, Native or Bilingual Proficiency." The scale encompasses four language categories: listening comprehension, communication, fluency and pronunciation. The highest value for each category is six; twenty-four is the highest possible score for the total rating scale.

Student Assessment of Oral Test

A questionnaire was adapted by OEA staff to determine what the students' attitude was toward the oral interview testing procedure. The questionnaire, shown in Appendix F, consisted of a series of questions on a Likert scale and an essay question (Shohamy, 1979).

ESOL Teacher (Tester) Assessment of Oral Test/Training

A second questionnaire was developed by OEA staff to elicit ESOL teachers' (the testers) ratings of a) the training workshop and b) the oral test, through both Likert-type and essay responses. (Appendix G).

Reliability and Validity Estimates of the Instruments

Reliability

Intercorrelations between subscales and total scores of the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement, for the LEP students tested in this evaluation were high and positive. These data are presented in Table 6. The highest correlation is between the Fluency Subscale and total B.E.S.T. score ($r = .94$, $p < .001$). Correlations between the Reading Subscale (identification of signs) and other scales were positive but low, indicating a weak relationship among sign-reading and other measures of oral proficiency. The correlations among the subscales of the B.E.S.T. were moderate but significant, supporting the independent contributions of each subscale to the total score.

Significant correlations between the B.E.S.T. and the Supplement were also found (Table 6). The highest correlation is between the total scores on the B.E.S.T. and the Supplement ($r = .84$, $p < .001$). This correlation indicates that the Supplement is measuring the same oral proficiency skills assessed in the B.E.S.T., and therefore, it supports the addition of the Supplement to the B.E.S.T. The pattern of intercorrelations between the total Supplement score and its subscales also reveals high and significant relationships.

The intercorrelations of test subscales and total scores with the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement composite score reflect a similar pattern. All correlation coefficients are significant and positive, demonstrating the content validity and internal consistency of the test. These correlations substantiate the pragmatic value of the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement as a measure of oral proficiency; and concomitantly, support the use of the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement composite score as the criterion for data analyses.

The intercorrelations with the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement composite score reflect a similar pattern. All of these coefficients are also significant and positive, supporting the content validity and internal consistency of the test.

Further evidence of the internal consistency of B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement was obtained by calculating Cronbach Alpha coefficients for each subscale and total scores. As can be seen in Table 7, the Alpha coefficients for the total scores are generally strong and positive. The fluency subscale had the highest Alpha coefficient, and the reading subscale; the lowest Alpha, which replicates the pattern of intercorrelations described above. These findings parallel those found by the test authors, who reported a range of a reliability estimate, (KR-20) between .95 and .98 for the subscales of the B.E.S.T. (CAL, 1982, pg.5).

The oral proficiency scale demonstrated a high degree of internal consistency and reliability. The language category subscales correlated positively with each other and very strongly with the total score (see Table 8). In addition, internal consistency as determined by the Cronbach Alpha, was very high, .96 (see Table 7). Since the total rating score is so highly related to all scales, it is used as an additional criterion for data analyses.

Interscorer reliability for the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement was determined for this evaluation by using different raters, in two separate administrations of the test. Interrater reliability coefficients were computed for first and second testings of students. Thirteen students were randomly chosen to be retested within 24 hours of the initial test administration. Correlations between testers for the total B.E.S.T. and for the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement, were .71 and .69, respectively. These correlations, as shown in Table 9, are positive and reflect a high level of agreement for two different testers assessing the same student's oral performance at two different times. The magnitude of interrater agreement for the Supplement was .40, which may be an artifact of both sample size and the small number of items on this part of the test. In general, interrater correlations were good.

Higher interrater reliabilities were also reported by the test authors, when student performance on the B.E.S.T. was scored by the tester and a "checkrater" at the same time. Reported reliabilities ranged from .80 to .97 (CAL, 1982, pg. 6).

Validity

The B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement was considered to have high face validity and content similarity for the types of language instruction and real-life language-use tasks it is intended to represent. Face validity and content similarity were reported in the test manual, and also obtained from Department of Bilingual/Foreign Language Education program staff. Additional validity-related information for the instruments was obtained through the correlations of the test scores with oral proficiency ratings and instructor-provided ESOL classifications.

B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement scores with teacher oral proficiency ratings of LEP and Exited-ESOL students. Table 10 shows the correlation coefficients of each rating scale and the total rating scale with the total test scores. It is clear from an examination of this table that the oral proficiency ratings given by ESOL teachers are moderately related to test performance. Correlations between total oral proficiency ratings of LEP students and total scores on B.E.S.T., Supplement and B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement range from .51 to .59.

A separate analysis of the relation of oral proficiency ratings given by the English teachers of Exited-ESOL students (Table 11) shows a similar relation to that of the LEP students' ratings.

The authors of the B.E.S.T. report correlations between ratings of oral proficiency and test scores that range from .49 to .71 which they consider as showing a strong relationship. (CAL, 1982, pg. 5).

B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement scores with ESOL classification. The relation of ESOL classifications of LEP students to oral proficiency as measured by the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement was low, indicating that the oral test is measuring English language proficiency skills that are not as directly measured when students' ESOL classifications are determined (see Table 10).

Teacher oral proficiency ratings with ESOL classifications. Correlations between ESOL classifications and teacher oral proficiency ratings were moderately strong for LEP students. They ranged from .43 to .60, as shown in Table 12. These correlations indicate that there are possible differences between measuring oral fluency directly, as was done for this evaluation, and more indirectly, as in the Dade County Secondary Placement Test for student classification. The relation of ESOL levels to teacher oral proficiency ratings for LEP students suggests that a common core of language skills are being assessed by ESOL teachers both when they classify students in ESOL, and when they rate the students' oral proficiency. Since oral proficiency ratings show a stronger relationship with test scores than ESOL classifications, the former were used to predict oral proficiency scores for LEP and Exited-ESOL students.

Testers

The testing team was comprised of eight secondary and two elementary ESOL teachers, who had a minimum of one year experience in teaching ESOL, and appropriate internal certification. These teachers were identified by the Bilingual/Foreign Language Department. They received one day of extensive training by OEA staff in the application and scoring of the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement.

Data Collection

Testers were randomly assigned to schools; however no teacher was assigned to a school where she was presently teaching. Each tester received a list of students and replacements. The students were not identified by ESOL classification. The random assignment of testers to schools, and the fact that no descriptions of the students were given to the testers, ensured a more objective evaluation.

The B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement was administered individually in a quiet self-contained area. Testing was completed in two consecutive days. Students selected for the interrater reliability aspect of the evaluation were tested twice within a 24 hour period.

Ratings of LEP students on the Oral Proficiency Scale were obtained from their current ESOL teachers in early June. Exited-ESOL students were rated on the scale by their current English teacher at the same time.

RESULTS

Cutoff Score For Oral Language Proficiency

In order to determine the extent of oral proficiency of graduating LEP students, the procedures outlined below were used to establish a cutoff score.

Formation of Two Proficiency Groups by Total Rating Score

The first step in establishing the criterion score for oral proficiency was to obtain an independent assessment of student oral language proficiency ratings from the students' ESOL and English teachers for both the LEP and Exited-ESOL students respectively. These ratings were used because they were found to be: (1) independent measures of oral proficiency, (2) significantly correlated with B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement test scores and (3) internally consistent (See section of report, reliability and validity). Since each of the language categories was found to be equally related to the total rating score; the sum of the four language category subscales was used in the analyses. The total possible score is 24 points.

Based on the total oral proficiency rating score, LEP students were divided into two groups: high (a total rating of 16 or above) and low (total rating of 15 or below). Sixty-seven LEP students were rated by their ESOL teachers; of those, thirty-seven received a total rating score of 16 or above and thirty received a total rating score of 15 or below. Means and standard deviations were calculated on the total B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement for the High and Low Rating Proficiency Groups (see Table 13). The mean score for the high group was 82.5 with a standard deviation of 10.35; while the mean score for the low group was 65.8 and a standard deviation of 15.19. These values indicate that the oral proficiency rating predictor score of 16 is capable of separating students' oral test performance on the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement into two distinct rating proficiency levels, and that students' scores on the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement are relatively consistent with their oral language performance in their ESOL classes.

Selection of the Predictor Total Oral Rating Score

A total oral language proficiency score is based on the sum of each of the four language skill category ratings (see Appendix E). Ratings for each category are on a six-point scale; the highest value is six, the lowest is one (see Figure 1). A rating of six indicates that the student is demonstrating native or bilingual proficiency in a skill category; a rating of one indicates an almost complete absence of proficiency in that skill. The highest total score obtainable is 24, which indicates native or bilingual proficiency in all language categories. A total rating score of 16, by definition, corresponds to the minimum level of oral proficiency needed for effective communication and interaction in school, on the job or in social settings. The definition for this minimum proficiency level is summarized as follows:

> The student can follow multiple directions, and understands spoken English at nearly normal speed. Moderate repetition is necessary. Vocabulary permits expression of ideas in his/her own area of interest, expression of ideas in other areas is fair to good. He/she can respond with grammatically correct answers to what, who and when questions, and has moderate difficulty with how and why questions. The student's speech

Figure 1

Summary of Oral Language Proficiency Ratings

Rating Description
1. No Proficiency (unintelligible)
2. Elementary Proficiency (Poor)
3. Limited Working Proficiency (Fair)
4. Minimum School/Job/ Social Proficiency (Good)
5. Full School/Job/ Social Proficiency (Above Average)
6. Native or Bilingual Proficiency (Excellent)

is moderately hesitant, but he/she can give several long explanations using past and progressive tenses correctly, to questions on familiar and unfamiliar situations. He/she can retell most of the key events of a standard newspaper item or a multi-paragraph essay. The student is readily understood. He/she has an accent. Pronunciation errors cause occasional misunderstanding, but his/her accent does not lead to misunderstanding.

The score corresponding to this definition was selected as the predictor, so that students could be classified into two groups: one with ratings at 16 or above, the other with ratings at 15 or below.

Application of the Multiple Classification Scheme (MCS) to Determine the Cutoff Score

To determine the cutoff score on the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement that divides the LEP students into those whose oral language proficiency is good-to-excellent and those whose proficiency is only poor-to-fair, a statistical procedure, the multiple classification scheme (MCS) was used. This procedure, suggested by Briere and Hinofotis (1979) determines a cutoff score when two groups have overlapping scores. The formula for determining the cutoff point is:

$$MCS = \frac{(X_1 \cdot SD_2) + (X_2 \cdot SD_1)}{(SD_1 + SD_2)}$$

The values used in the formula were the means and standard deviations for the group rated high (total oral proficiency rating of 16 or above) and for the group rated low (total rating score of 15 or below).

In the case of the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement Total Scores, the formula was calculated as follows:

$$MCS = \frac{(65.86 \times 10.35) + (82.51 \times 15.19)}{(15.19 + 10.35)}$$

$$MCS = 76$$

By this process, a score of 76 on the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement was established as the cutoff between "good-to-excellent" and "poor-to-fair" oral proficiency.

Oral Proficiency of Students Tested

LEP Students' Scores

Two groups emerged, based on the cutoff score of 76: the good-to-excellent group, 76 or above; and the poor-to-fair proficiency group: 75 or below. Data were analyzed by comparing the good-to-excellent and poor-to-fair proficiency groups, with respect to LEP students and Exited-ESOL students. The means and standard deviations on the total test scores and total rating score appear in Tables 14 and 15 respectively. An analysis of the means of LEP student profi-

ciency groups (Table 14) shows that the means are higher in the good-to-excellent group than in the poor-to-fair group. It is important to note that although the cutoff score on the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement was 76, the mean of the good-to-excellent group is 86. This indicates a higher level of test performance and consequently greater oral proficiency for LEP students than reflected by the cutoff score. Sixty-two percent of LEP students scored in the good-to-excellent proficiency range; 38 percent scored in the poor-to-fair range.

Exited-ESOL Students' Scores

The results found for the Exited-ESOL students, as seen in Table 15, show a similar pattern between the means of the good-to-excellent proficiency group and the poor-to-fair proficiency group; with higher means in the good-to-excellent group. The mean score on the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement for the good-to-excellent proficiency group is 88, which is higher than the cutoff score. Seventy-six percent of Exited-ESOL students scored in the good-to-excellent proficiency range; 24 percent scored in the poor-to-fair range.

Comparison of LEP and Exited-ESOL Students' Scores

An examination of the test scores of the LEP and the Exited-ESOL students, reveals that the means of the Exited-ESOL students are higher than the means of the LEP students, supporting the use of the Exited-ESOL students as a criterion reference group. Tables 14 and 15 show that there is not a large difference in mean test scores between LEP and Exited-ESOL students in the good-to-excellent proficiency groups. This may indicate that good-to-excellent LEP students have the same extent of oral fluency as good-to-excellent Exited-ESOL students. In general, the means of the good-to-excellent proficiency groups for both LEP and Exited-ESOL students are quite good when compared to a mean of 100 for native speakers tested with the B.E.S.T., reported by test developers (personal communication). These scores indicate high oral proficiency in the good-to- excellent LEP and Exited-ESOL groups.

Reviewing the total rating scores of LEP and Exited-ESOL students in the good-to-excellent proficiency groups, it can be seen that both LEP and Exited-ESOL students received comparable ratings by their teachers. However, Exited-ESOL students in the poor-to-fair proficiency group received a lower oral proficiency rating than LEP students in this group.

Exited-ESOL students received lower oral proficiency ratings by their English teachers than LEP students, who were rated by their ESOL teachers. Although this finding may reflect a lower level of oral proficiency for many Exited-ESOL students as perceived by their English teachers; it may also show how a different classroom context (students and assignments) may influence teacher ratings, that is, a regular English class as compared to an ESOL class.

Agreement Between Test Scores and Ratings

As has been shown, the assessment of students is considerably strengthened when more than one measure is used. For this evaluation, an oral test was used as the criterion for oral proficiency; independent ratings of students' oral skills were added to establish concurrent validity for the assessment procedure. Following is an analysis of the extent of agreement relationship between the predictor (oral ratings), and the criterion (test scores), as summarized in Table 16.

High agreement. High agreement refers to cases where students received high scores and high ratings, or low scores and low ratings. For LEP students, 32 in the good-to-excellent proficiency group received high teacher ratings (at or above 16); and 20 in the poor-to-fair proficiency group received low teacher ratings (at 15 or below). An analysis of the scores of the Exited-ESOL students reveals that 16 in the good-to-excellent proficiency group received high teacher ratings; while 6 of the students in the poor-to-fair proficiency group received low teacher ratings.

Marginal agreement. Marginal agreement refers to minimal discrepancies between test scores and ratings. Some LEP and Exited-ESOL students in the good-to-excellent proficiency group were rated close to the predictor score by their ESOL and English teachers respectively. Five LEP students and two Exited-ESOL students received ratings close to 16 (14 - 15). There were also some LEP students and Exited-ESOL students in the poor-to-fair proficiency group who achieved scores close to the cutoff, and who were rated highly by their teacher. These three LEP students and one Exited-ESOL student achieved scores which ranged from 73 to 75, which are very close to the cutoff score of 76. In summary, marginal agreement was found for eight LEP students and three Exited-ESOL students.

Low agreement. Low agreement refers to discrepancies between test scores and ratings for students who score high on one measure and low on the other. For five LEP and three Exited-ESOL students in the good-to-excellent proficiency groups, the agreement was low because their teachers rated them low. For three LEP students in the poor-to-fair proficiency group, the agreement was also low because they received high ratings from their ESOL teachers.

In summary, for 51 LEP students and 22 Exited-ESOL students there is high agreement between oral proficiency as determined by the cutoff score and teacher ratings, for both groups of students: good-to-excellent and poor-to-fair proficiency. For 11% of the LEP and Exited-ESOL students agreement was marginal, that is, they achieved the standard on one of the two measures of oral proficiency, and achieved within 2 - 3 points on the other. For these students, further testing would be warranted. For the remaining students for whom agreement was low, additional data and/or information would have to be studied.

Relationship of Time Factors

Time in United States. Item 7 on the B.E.S.T. asks the students when he/she arrived in this country. Responses to this question were written for 97 students, and are presented in Table 17. An examination of this table reveals that most of the students have been in this country for three years or less. No other discernible patterns were noted. It appears that time in the United States, as reported by the students, is not related to oral proficiency scores, for LEP or Exited-ESOL students.

Time in ESOL. Most LEP students exit ESOL classes after four or five semester credits have been taken. For some, additional semesters of ESOL instruction are necessary. In an effort to determine whether time in ESOL instruction was related to oral proficiency, an analysis was made of the number of semester credits taken by good-to-excellent and poor-to-fair proficiency groups, for both LEP and Exited-ESOL students. While no significant differences were found by proficiency groups, it appears that the average number of semester credits in ESOL for LEP students was 6.0; for Exited-ESOL

students it was 4.5, as shown in Table 18. This would indicate that Exited-ESOL students in general had less difficulty in learning English, and the LEP students were experiencing more difficulty.

Assessment of the Oral Test Experience

Students' Reactions

The students' assessment of the oral test experience was very positive, as evidenced in Tables 19 and 20. Fifty-eight students completed the rating scale. These students reported that the oral test experience had been very interesting, comfortable, and enjoyable. They also reported that it had been valuable and informative because they had learned a lot from it, and because it increased their confidence in the English language. The open-ended responses supported the results of the ratings as reflected in the 258 positive comments written. Although some students mentioned that they had felt nervous, they added that it was mostly at the onset of the test, and due to the fact that they had never taken a formal oral test before. Most of the students wrote that the test could help evaluate their progress in English, that it was very good and helpful, and they recommended the use of the test for other students.

ESOL Testers' (Teachers) Reactions

Testers were asked to complete a questionnaire designed to elicit their assessment of the training, and the application and scoring of the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement. Eight (out of 10) ESOL teachers who were trained as testers rated the training procedure, as shown in Table 21. The training appears to have been a valuable experience, as indicated by the positive ratings. The testers felt that the purpose of the evaluation, and the test itself, had been explained clearly. Furthermore, they indicated that the training had increased their abilities in administering and scoring English oral proficiency skills.

The testers also responded to open-ended questions about the test and its administration. Testing conditions generally were good; only interference from the public address system was mentioned, and by one teacher.

The most frequent problems in applying the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement were in eliciting three different responses to some of the fluency items, a standard established by OEA for obtaining the highest score in the category. About five of the B.E.S.T. test items and one of the Supplement items were reported as confusing and clearer directions for these items were needed. The most frequent problems presented in scoring the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement were distinguishing among scoring values for fluency items, especially between a score of two and three.

Recommendations for improving training included extending the length of the training program, and providing more practice with the test, especially practice with students. Testers also suggested various modifications in the application and scoring of specific test items on both the B.E.S.T. and Supplement.

Testers' feelings about using the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement as a measure of oral proficiency were very positive. All the testers liked it and thought that it would be a valuable aid in assessing the oral proficiency of ESOL

students. One teacher wrote that it "covers a wide area of essential communication skills with an economy of words and steps," while another stated that it is "excellent-a beautiful beginning towards an instrument we really need in the field."

CONCLUSIONS

The question addressed by this evaluation was "What is the oral proficiency of twelfth grade limited English proficient students?" In an attempt to answer the question, the B.E.S.T. plus Supplement, an oral language skills test, was administered in May to 72 randomly selected twelfth grade students who were eligible to graduate in 1984. Independent oral proficiency ratings were also obtained for each student from their ESOL teachers.

Oral testing was conducted in May, 1984, by a team of ten experienced ESOL teachers, who were trained in the oral interview and scoring procedures by OEA staff. In addition to the 72 LEP students tested, 29 students who had exited from ESOL classes within the past twelve months were tested, as one of the criterion measures for the oral test. Finally, a third random sample of 13 students drawn from all of the students tested was retested, to determine interrater reliability.

Not directly related to the questions of the study, but nonetheless of more than marginal importance, are 1) the attitude of the examinees toward the oral interview testing procedure, and 2) the comments and other feedback of the testers toward the training and test itself. This information was also obtained.

The conclusions of the evaluation are as follows:

1. Sixty-two percent, or 45 LEP students, achieved the cutoff score of 76 or above on the oral test. The mean of this group was quite good: 86. The oral proficiency of these students may be described as good-to-excellent. They can converse through extended discourse and respond to and ask questions on a variety of topics related to school, home, job and social situations. Those students can retell the key events of a standard newspaper item or a multi-paragraph essay.

2. Thirty-eight percent, or 27 LEP students, scored below the cutoff score of 76. The mean of this group was 60. The oral proficiency of these students may be described as poor-to-fair. In general, they can respond to and ask simple questions, and discuss topics related to school, home, job and social situations slightly beyond the survival level. These students can retell some, or in several cases half, of the key events of a standard newspaper item or a multi-paragraph essay.

3. Seventy-six percent of the Exited-ESOL students tested, or those who had exited within the past year, scored at or above the cutoff score of 76. The mean for this group was also quite good: 88. Only 7 exited students achieved below the cutoff; the mean for these students was 65. The high achievement of the majority of the exited students tested indicates that these students have good-to-excellent oral proficiency, approximating the proficiency of native speakers who score 100 on the test. This high achievement further supports the use

of Exited-ESOL students as one of the criterion measures of oral fluency in this study.

4. There was no discernible relationship between the length of time in the United States, reported by LEP and Exited-ESOL students, and oral proficiency scores, for either group of students. However, LEP students participated in ESOL for approximately 6 semesters, while the Exited-ESOL students tended to be 'early-exiters' (approximately 4.5 semesters in ESOL), or a 1.5 difference of semesters. It appears that the LEP students in this evaluation were experiencing more difficulty in learning English than their peers, and therefore required additional ESOL instruction. This finding should be interpreted cautiously, as grades, and the type of other courses taken by the students, particularly English and English remediation courses, need to be considered. Further, the Exited-ESOL students in this study were those who had exited within the past 12 months. The number of students who entered ESOL at the same time as the students in this evaluation, but who had exited more than a year ago, is not known. Further study of the time in ESOL factor is needed.

5. Fifty-eight ratings and 282 comments were obtained from students, with respect to their attitude toward the oral test. The formal oral English test, although a new experience for the students, was perceived by them as positive and valuable. The students, as a whole, complimented the testers for putting them at ease, and reported this type of test could help evaluate their progress in English.

6. Testers' (ESOL teachers) ratings of the training provided were high. The testers indicated that the training had increased their abilities in administering and scoring English oral proficiency measures. While some testers offered several suggestions concerning the application and scoring of specific test items, all felt that the test would be a valuable aid in assessing the oral proficiency of ESOL students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The major recommendations indicated by the evaluation are:

1. Depending upon the availability of resources, future evaluation of LEP students in ESOL programs should examine the factors which significantly contribute to students' acquisition of English in the most effective, rapid and cost-efficient manner.

2. Oral proficiency, although important, is only one measure of a student's abilities in a second language. A complete assessment of a student's total language abilities should address reading, writing and cultural dimensions as well. Other factors, such as grades, exposure/contact to the second language outside of school, motivation and teacher judgment, in the form of a "profile," should also be included in the long-range plan for establishing English proficiency criteria for 12th grade ESOL students.

Additional recommendations are:

3. Oral testing of individual students appears to be a viable method of determining LEP students' oral English fluency, provided that the test adequately samples the oral language skills and tasks the student needs to master, is reasonably easy to administer and score, and minimum training of testers or ESOL teachers is required. The B.E.S.T. and Supplement, or a locally developed and validated test that follows the B.E.S.T. "model," is recommended.

4. The oral test selected for county-wide use at the senior high school level, e.g., placement, exit criteria, etc., should be field-tested with a sufficient number of students in each of grades 9-12, in each of the ESOL classifications.

5. The Oral Proficiency Rating Scale adapted for this evaluation could aid ESOL teachers in assessing the oral proficiency skills of their students. Further refinement and field-testing of the scale, to reflect different age levels and curriculum content, is suggested.

6. Concurrent validity of the instrument(s) selected should be obtained through administering, to a sample of the senior high school students, A) a second, non-structured oral proficiency test, e.g., the OPI; and B) a measure of all of the language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing and cultural awareness, through a general language proficiency test, e.g., the Pre-TOEFL or the SLEP. Teacher ratings of the tested students' oral language skills should also be obtained from a sample of experienced secondary ESOL teachers.

7. Student membership in ESOL programs by ESOL classification needs to be updated each semester in senior high schools. In gathering information for the selection of students for this evaluation, evaluators found many students whose ESOL levels were not current.

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APPENDIX A

Tables

Table 1

Distribution of Twelfth Grade Graduating Students by School, ESOL Classification and Exited-ESOL Status[a]

Senior High School	Number of Students: Total 12th Grade LEP and Exited-ESOL Students	LEP Students ESOL Classification 1	2	3	4	Total 12th Grade LEP Students	12th Grade Exited-ESOL Students[b]
American	10		2		1	3	7
Coral Gables	14		2			2	12
Hialeah[c]	7						7
Hialeah-Miami Lakes	7				1	1	6
Homestead	11		1		5	6	5
Miami Beach	20			3	5	8	12
Miami Carol City	8				6	6	2
Miami Central[c]	11						11
Miami Coral Park	15		5	2		7	8
Miami Edison	18				3	3	15
Miami Jackson	25			5	8	13	12
Miami Killian	6		1	2		3	3
Miami Palmetto	5		1	1		2	3
Miami Senior	74	1	7	4	15	27	47
Miami Southridge	8			1	1	2	6
Miami Springs	36			4	14	18	18
Miami Sunset	17			2		2	15
North Miami[c]	7						7
North Miami Beach	10			2	1	3	7
South Dade	3		1			1	2
South Miami	21				6	6	15
Southwest Miami	10		1	5		6	4
TOTAL	343	1	21	31	66	119	224

[a]Table compiled from reports provided by Senior High Schools in Spring 1984.

[b]Students classified as Exited-ESOL were transferred to regular English classes within the past 12 months.

[c]No 12th grade LEP students reported.

OEA: 7/11/84
ML/EVALU ESOL/LEP - 12th Grade (Table 1)

Table 2

Selected Demographic Characteristics
of Schools Sampled

Senior High School	% of F/R Lunch	% of LEP Students
American	1.4	2.0
Coral Gables	14.8	5.9
Homestead	11.1	2.7
Miami Beach	28.7	8.3
Miami Central	8.6	5.2
Coral Park	12.4	6.1
Miami Edison	35.8	11.8
Miami Jackson	9.2	10.1
Miami Senior	43.4	11.2
Miami Springs	38.2	9.2
Miami Sunset	2.1	3.9
North Miami Beach	10.4	1.9
South Miami	28.1	6.7
Southwest	5.4	4.9

Source: District and School Profiles 1983-84, Dade County Public Schools.

Table 3

Summary of Students and Schools Randomly
Selected for Evaluation of Twelfth Grade LEP
Students' Oral English Proficiency

POPULATION

Number of High Schools with 12th Grade LEP Students	Number of 12th Grade LEP Students by ESOL Classification				Total 12th Grade LEP Students	Number of 12th Grade Exited-ESOL Students
	1	2	3	4		
22	1	21	31	66	119	224

SAMPLE

Number of High Schools Randomly Selected	Number of 12th Grade LEP Students Randomly Selected by ESOL Classification				Total 12th Grade LEP Students Selected	Total 12th Grade Exited-ESOL Students Selected	Total Number of LEP and Exited Students Re-tested for Reliability	Total Number of Tests Applied
	1	2	3	4				
14	-	16	17	39	72	29	13	114

SUMMARY

% of High Schools Selected	Percent of 12th Grade LEP Students Randomly Selected by ESOL Classification				% of Total 12th Grade LEP Students Selected	% of Total 12th Grade Exited-ESOL Students Selected	% of Sample LEP and Exited Students Re-tested for Reliability
	1	2	3	4			
64	-	76%	55%	59%	60%	13%	13%

OEA: 7/27/84
ML/EVALU ESOL/LEP - 12th Grade (Table 3)

Table 4

Distribution of Students Tested by School

Senior High School	Number of Students					
	LEP Students by ESOL Classification			Exited-ESOL Students	Retested Students	Total Students Tested
	2	3	4			
American	1		1	1		3
Coral Gables	2			2		4
Homestead	1		4	1		6
Miami Beach		2	2	2		6
Miami Central[a]					3	3
Coral Park	5	1		3		9
Miami Edison			2	2	2	6
Miami Jackson		2	5	8		15
Miami Senior	6	2	10	1	3	22
Miami Springs		3	10	2	3	18
Miami Sunset		1		3		4
North Miami Beach		2	1	1		4
South Miami			4	2		6
Southwest Miami	1	4		1	2	8
Total	16	17	39	29	13	114

[a]Students included solely to establish interrater reliability. ESOL classes were not offered in 1983-84.

Table 5

Number of Students Tested by School and Country of Origin

Senior High School	Caribbean Island Nations				Central America				South America						Europe	Asia	
	Cuba	Haiti	Puerto Rico	Santo Domingo	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua	Bolivia	Chile	Colombia	Ecuador	Peru	Venezuela	Spain	Viet Nam	Not Reported
American	1		1										1				
Coral Gables	3						1										
Homestead	2		1								2					1	
Miami Beach																	6
Miami Central		2				1											
Coral Park	1			1				1		1	2	1		1	1		
Miami Edison		2															2
Miami Jackson	3	4	1	1			1	3	1				1				
Miami Senior	17		1	1													
Miami Springs	15																
Miami Sunset		1						1			1			1			
North Miami Beach			1								3						
South Miami	4				1						1						
Southwest	4		2														
TOTAL	50	9	7	3	1	1	2	5	1	1	9	1	2	2	1	1	8

Note: As reported by students in Item 6 of the B.E.S.T.

OEA: 7/16/84
ML/E:ALD ESOL/ESP - 12th Grade (Table 5)

Table 6

Correlation Coefficents among Subscales and Total Scores of
B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement for LEP Students

	B.E.S.T.						Supplement			B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement		
Test	Total on B.E.S.T.	Listening Comprehension	Communication	Pronunciation	Fluency	Reading	Total on Supplement	Communication	Fluency	Total on B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement	Total on Communication	Total on Fluency
Total Score, B.E.S.T.	--	.76***	.87***	.57***	.94***	.32**	.84***	.64***	.82***	.99***	.88***	.95***
Listening Comprehension		--	.58***	.47***	.67***	.15	.62***	.46***	.61***	.74***	.59***	.68***
Communication			--	.47***	.69***	.32**	.71***	.60***	.66***	.86***	.98***	.71***
Pronunciation				--	.47***	.16	.64***	.50***	.61***	.60***	.51***	.53***
Fluency					--	.21	.80***	.57***	.80***	.94***	.71***	.98***
Reading						--	.19*	.11	.20*	.30**	.30**	.21*
Total Score, Supplement							--	.78***	.96***	.90***	.78***	.88***
Communication								--	.58***	.69***	.74***	.60***
Fluency									--	.87***	.69***	.89***
Total Score, B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement										--	.88***	.96***
Total Score, Communication											--	.74***
Total Score, Fluency												--

Note: n = 72.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Table 7

Internal Consistency of Test Scores
and Ratings for LEP and Exited-ESOL Students

Scores	Coefficient[a]
B.E.S.T.	.90
Listening Comprehension	.67
Communication	.77
Fluency	.90
Pronunciation[b]	
Reading	.19
Supplement	.78
Communication	.55
Fluency	.76
B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement	.92
Ratings	.96

[a]Cronbach Alpha.

[b]Coefficient not reported because there is only one item on the test.

OEA: 7/17/84
ML/EVALU ESOL/LEP - 12th Grade (Table 7)

Table 8

Correlations Among Rating Scale
Language Categories

		Teacher Ratings on Language Categories			
Rating Scores	Total Rating	Listening Comprehension	Communication	Pronunciation	Fluency
Total Rating	-	.91	.92	.95	.91
Listening Comprehension		-	.80	.75	.84
Communication			-	.75	.82
Pronunciation				-	.84
Fluency					-

Note: n = 67. All correlations are significant beyond the .001 level.

Table 9

Interrater Reliability for Total Scores
of the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement

Total Test Scores	Pearson Correlation Coefficient
B.E.S.T.	.71*
Supplement	.40
B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement	.69*

Note: Five testers reapplied B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement within 24 hours of initial testing. Thirteen students representing all ESOL levels and exiters were retested.

*$p < .01$.

OEA: 7/17/84
ML/EVALU ESOL/LEP - 12th Grade (Table 9)

Table 10

Correlations of Oral Test Scores and
Teacher Oral Proficiency Ratings of LEP Students

		Teacher Ratings on Language Categories[b]				
Total Test Score	ESOL Level[a]	Listening Comprehension	Communication	Fluency	Pronunciation	Total Rating
B.E.S.T.	.20*	.51	.44	.54	.41	.55
Supplement	.21*	.54	.48	.57	.40	.59
B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement	.21*	.53	.46	.56	.42	.51

[a] $n = 72$. [b] All correlations of language category ratings and test scores are significant beyond the .001 level. $n = 67$.
*$p. < .05$.

OEA: 7/11/84
ML/EVALU ESOL/LEP - 12th Grade (Table 10)

Table 11

Correlations of Oral Test Scores and Teacher Oral Proficiency Ratings of Exited-ESOL Students

	Teacher Ratings on Language Categories				
Total Test Score	Listening Comprehension	Communication	Fluency	Pronunciation	Total Rating
B.E.S.T.	.44*	.46*	.62**	.47*	.54*
Supplement	.46*	.57*	.60**	.48*	.57**
B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement	.46*	.50**	.64**	.49*	.57**

Note: $n = 28$.
*$p < .01$. **$p < .001$.

OEA: 7/26/84
ML/EVALU ESOL/LEP - 12th Grade (Table 11)

Table 12

Correlation of Teacher Oral Proficiency Ratings
For ESOL Classifications and LEP Students

Teacher Oral Proficiency Ratings	ESOL Levels (2, 3, 4)
Listening Comprehension	.43
Communication	.60
Fluency	.49
Pronunciation	.47
Total	.53

Note: All correlations are significant beyond the .001 level.

Table 13
Means and Standard Deviations
of Total B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement for LEP Students
by High and Low Oral Proficiency Groups

	Oral Proficiency Groups	
	Low	High
Total Oral Proficiency Rating	≤ 15	≥ 16
B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement		
Mean	65.86	82.51
S.D.	15.19	10.35
n	30	37

OEA: 7/26/84
ML/EVALU ESOL/LEP - 12th Grade (Table 13)

Table 14

Means and Standard Deviations of Total
Test Scores and Ratings for LEP Students
Using Oral Proficiency Cutoff Score

	Total B. E. S. T. Plus Supplement Score					
	Poor-to-Fair Proficiency Group			Good-to-Excellent Proficiency Group		
Total Scores	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD
B.E.S.T.	27	56.26	9.8	45	76.33	5.6
Supplement	27	4.07	2.5	45	9.47	2.2
B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement	27	60.33	11.6	45	85.80	7.1
Total Rating	26	13.04	5.3	41	17.88	3.4

OEA: 7/17/84
ML/EVALU ESOL/LEP - 12th Grade (Table 14)

Table 15

Means and Standard Deviations of Total Scores
and Ratings for Exited-ESOL Students
Using Oral Proficiency Cutoff Score

	Total B. E. S. T. Plus Supplement Score					
	Poor-to-Fair Proficiency Group			Good-to-Excellent Proficiency Group		
Total Scores	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD
B.E.S.T.	7	60.86	6.1	22	78.18	6.4
Supplement	7	4.29	1.8	22	10.41	2.0
B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement	7	65.14	7.8	22	88.55	7.6
Total Rating	7	9.71	5.0	21	17.00	4.0

OEA: 7/17/84
ML/EVALU ESOL/LEP - 12th Grade (Table 15)

Table 16

Agreement Between the Two Oral Proficiency Groups and Teacher Ratings

Oral Proficiency Group	Teacher Ratings	N	Percent of Students Tested[a]	High Agreement	Marginal Agreement	Low Agreement
		LEP STUDENTS				
Good-to-Excellent ≥ 76	High ≥16	31	46%	76%		
Poor-to-Fair < 76	Low < 16	20	30%			
Good-to-Excellent ≥ 76	Low 14-15	5	7%		11%	
Poor-to-Fair 73 - 75	High ≥16	3	4%			
Good-to-Excellent ≥ 76	Low ≤ 13	5	7%			11%
Poor-to-Fair ≤ 72	High ≥ 16	3	4%			
		EXITED-ESOL STUDENTS				
Good-to-Excellent ≥ 76	High ≥ 16	16	57%	78%		
Poor-to-Fair < 76	Low < 16	6	21%			
Good-to-Excellent ≥ 76	Low 14 - 15	2	7%		11%	
Poor-to-Fair 73 - 75	High ≥16	1	4%			
Good-to-Excellent ≥ 76	Low ≤ 13	3	11%			11%
Poor-to-Fair ≤ 72	High ≥ 16	0	0%			

[a] Due to rounding errors, the total percent of LEP students tested does not add to 100%.

CEA: 7/27/84
ML/EVALU ESOL/LEP - 12th Grade (Table 16)

Table 17

Length of Time in the United States of LEP and Exited-ESOL Students by Oral Proficiency Group

Months in U.S.		LEP			Exited-ESOL		
		Poor-to-Fair Proficiency[a]	Good-to-Excellent Proficiency	Total	Poor-to-Fair Proficiency	Good-to-Excellent Proficiency[b]	Total
1 - 12	n	5	4	9	-	1	1
	%	19.2	9.0	12.7	-	5.3	3.8
13 - 24	n	4	11	15	2	5	7
	%	15.4	24.4	21.1	28.6	26.3	26.9
25 - 36	n	11	9	20	2	6	8
	%	42.3	20.0	28.2	28.6	31.6	30.8
37 - 48	n	5	15	20	2	4	6
	%	19.2	33.3	28.2	28.6	21.0	23.1
49 +	n	1	6	7	1	3	4
	%	3.9	13.3	9.8	14.2	15.8	15.4
Total Number[a]		26	45	71	7	19	26

Note: As reported by students in item 7 of the B.E.S.T.

[a]Time in U.S. not reported for one student.

[b]Time in U.S. not reported for three students

OEA: 7/16/84
ML/EVALU ESOL/LEP - 12th Grade (Table 17)

Table 18

Semester Credits in ESOL Instruction by Students Tested

	Students			
	LEP		Exited-ESOL	
	Poor-to-Fair Proficiency	Good-to-Excellent Proficiency	Poor-to-Fair Proficiency	Good-to-Excellent Proficiency
Number of Semester Credits in ESOL	5.7	6.2	4.9	4.1

Source: AIDS Student Search, June, 1984.

Table 19

Students' Ratings of the Oral Test Experience

Statements	Rating Scale: Percent of Students Using Rating Code — Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	No Response	Mean Rating
1. The Oral testing experience was:							
a. comfortable	67.2	24.1	3.4	3.4	1.7		1.5
b. difficult	1.7	10.3	12.1	37.9	37.9		4.0
c. distressing	3.4	13.8	19.0	29.3	34.5		3.8
d. fun	24.1	36.2	19.0	10.3	10.3		2.5
e. pleasant	43.1	34.5	10.3	8.6	3.4		1.9
f. too easy	15.5	46.6	12.1	22.4	3.4		2.5
g. interesting	63.8	31.0	3.4	1.7	-		1.4
2. I learned a lot from it.	41.4	37.9	3.4	10.3	3.4		1.9
3. It increased my confidence in the English language.	27.6	48.3	13.8	6.9	-	3.4	1.9
4. I like this kind of test.	51.7	32.8	5.2	1.7	5.2	3.4	1.6

Note: n = 58.

Table 20

Frequency Distribution of Students' Comments
on Attitude Toward the Oral Testing Experience

Comments	Attitude Toward the Oral Test Experience	
	Frequency	Percentages
POSITIVE		
a. Shows teacher how much English I know	33	11.7
b. Like, fun, comfortable, pleasant	60	21.3
c. Learned from test, helpful, very good, important, recommend use of test	112	39.7
d. Interesting	30	10.6
e. Content was adequate	16	5.7
f. English important, like learning English	7	2.5
Total Positive	258	91.5
NEGATIVE		
a. Made me nervous, afraid	16	5.7
b. Frustrating, difficult	4	1.4
c. Worthless	2	.7
d. Disliked	2	.7
Total Negative	24	8.5

Note: Based on 282 comments.

Table 21

Testers (ESOL Teachers) Ratings of Oral Test and Training

Statements About Training	Percent of Testers Using Rating Code					Mean Rating
	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Undecided 3	Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5	
1. Explained purpose of testing clearly	100					1.0
2. Explained test clearly	62.5	37.5				1.4
3. Explained scoring procedures clearly	37.5	37.5	25.0			1.9
4. Provided sufficient examples of student responses	62.5	25.0		12.5		1.6
5. Provided sufficient practice in administering and scoring the test	25.0	62.5		12.5		2.0
6. Provided useful materials for administering and scoring the test	87.5	12.5				1.1
7. Increased my abilities in administering and scoring English oral proficiency	50.0	50.0				1.5

Note: n = 8.

Sylvia H. Rothfarb
Ralph Robinett
Dade County Public Schools

Appendix B

Description of Esol Levels
Areas of Functioning in English

ESOL LEVEL	UNDERSTANDING SPOKEN ENGLISH	GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE	DISTORTION OF WORDS/ INTONATION	VOCABULARY
LEVEL 1	Very little understanding; speaker must translate constantly	Limited English expression-grammatically incorrect	Limited English expression-constant distortion of words and intonation	Extremely limited-very few English words in vocabulary
LEVEL 2	Limited understanding; speaker must always choose words carefully and/or restate ideas	Makes errors in most frequent and useful significant* grammatical structures	Makes frequent significant distortions of words and intonation	Always gropes for high frequency words and almost always has to rephrase to be understood
LEVEL 3	Fair understanding; speaker must often choose words carefully and/or restate ideas	Makes many significant grammatical errors of interference	Makes significant distortions of words and intonation	Often gropes for high frequency words and often has to rephrase to be understood
LEVEL 4	Extensive understanding; speaker has to restate ideas only occasionally	Makes occasional significant grammatical errors of interference	Makes occasional significant distortions of words and intonation	Rarely gropes for high frequency words, occasionally has to rephrase to be understood
LEVEL 5	Understands nearly everything a native speaker of comparable age and intelligence understands	Makes few grammatical errors; can rephrase to make meaning clear	Makes minor nonsignificant distortions of pronunciations and intonation	Vocabulary comparable to that of native speaker of same age and intelligence level

*The term significant as used here refers to items having implications for communicating meaning.

Appendix C
B.E.S.T. CORE SECTION CONTENT OUTLINE

TOPIC AREAS	CORE SECTION		
	Speaking	Listening	Reading
Greetings, Personal Informa- tion, Employment	Greets, gives name, spells name, states where from, how long in U.S.		Reads "Name" and "Address" on form
Time/Numbers	Tells time on clock	Understands spoken time	Reads time on clock
Money/Shopping for Food, Clothing	Asks "How much...?", "Where is...?" Compares shopping in U.S. & native country	Understands spoken price; shows correct coins	Reads price sign
Health and Parts of Body	Describes ailment, condition	Shows understanding of parts of body	
Emergencies/Safety	Describes accident scene		Matches signs, e.g., NO SMOKING, STOP, etc., with appro- priate photographs
Housing/Kinship	Identifies family members, rooms of house, household activities		
Directions	Asks for, gives directions	Understands spoken directions	Reads map

Appendix D

ORAL SUPPLEMENT CONTENT OUTLINE

Item No.	TOPIC AREAS	Points	SUPPLEMENT SECTION Speaking	Listening	Reading	Writing
1	Health/Social	(2)	Expresses sympathy	Understands health condition	--	--
2	Restaurant/Social	(2)	Asks for replacement; uses expressions of courtesy and/or complaint	Shows understanding of restaurant scene	--	--
3	Employment/Interview	(3)	Describes personal attributes	Understands job interview situation; persuasion	--	--
4	Student Government Elections	(3)	Describes what a student did to win an election; uses past tense		--	--
5	Working Toward a Goal with Peers/Social/ Culture	(3)	Retells story on Teen Center; uses past and future tenses		Reads current event newspaper story: Teen Center Fever	

Appendix E

DESCRIPTION OF ORAL PROFICIENCY RATINGS
ENGLISH ORAL LANGUAGE CATEGORIES

RATINGS	LISTENING COMPREHENSION	COMMUNICATION	FLUENCY	PRONUNCIATION
1 = No Proficiency (Unintelligible)	Cannot follow directions or respond to simple questions. Cannot understand even simple conversation.	Incomprehensible, inappropriate responses to simple questions on familiar topics.* Vocabulary is limited to occasional isolated words.	Speech is extremely hesitant. Unable to respond to questions on familiar or unfamiliar situations.** Cannot re-tell any of the key events of a standard newspaper item or a multi-paragraph essay.***	Speech virtually incomprehensible.
2 = Elementary Proficiency (Poor)	Can follow some directions and respond to simple questions but frequent repetition and rephrasing necessary. Understands at only very slow, simple speed.	Can respond intelligibly but with one or more grammatical errors to simple what, who and where questions on familiar topics.* Vocabulary is limited to that necessary to express simple survival needs and basic courtesy formulae.	Speech is very slow and uneven. Can give one or two short, halting responses to questions on familiar or unfamiliar situations.** Can re-tell one or two key events of a standard newspaper item or a multi-paragraph essay.***	Very hard to understand; frequently not comprehensible.
3 = Limited Working Proficiency (Fair)	Can follow most directions. Considerable repetition necessary; understands at slower than normal speed.	Can respond with grammatically correct answers to simple what, who and where questions on familiar topics.* Has considerable difficulty with how and why questions on familiar topics* and familiar/unfamiliar situations.** Vocabulary permits some discussion beyond basic survival needs.	Speech is frequently hesitant and jerky; sentence may be left incompleted. Can give several short explications, usually in the present tense, to questions on familiar and unfamiliar situations.** Can re-tell half of the key events of a standard newspaper item or a multi-paragraph essay.***	Generally understood; concentrated listening is necessary; errors cause frequent misunderstanding.
4 = Minimum School/Job/ Social Proficiency (Good)	Can follow nearly all directions, as well as multiple directions. Moderate repetition necessary; understands at nearly normal speed.	Vocabulary permits expression of ideas in own area of interest; expression of ideas in other areas is fair to good. Can respond with grammatically correct answers to simple what, who and where questions on familiar topics.* Has moderate difficulty with how and why questions on familiar topics* and familiar/unfamiliar situations.**	Speech is moderately hesitant. Can give several long explications using past and progressive tenses correctly, to questions on familiar and unfamiliar situations.** Can re-tell most of the key events of a standard newspaper item or a multi-paragraph essay.***	Readily understood; has accent, but it doesn't lead to miscommunication; errors cause occasional misunderstanding.
5 = Full School/Job/ Social Proficiency (Above Average)	Understands at normal speed, occasional repetition necessary. Can follow multiple directions.	Can express ideas in nearly all areas pertaining to school, job or social situations. Can respond appropriately, with grammatically correct answers to most questions on unfamiliar topics; has occasional difficulty with how or why questions.	Speech is occasionally hesitant. Can give several long explications using a variety of tenses correctly, to questions on familiar and unfamiliar situations.** Can re-tell all of the key events of a standard newspaper item or a multi-paragraph essay.***	Always intelligible, though definite accent present.
6 = Native or Bilingual Proficiency (Excellent)	Appears to understand everything without difficulty.	Responses similar to a native speaker.	Speech is as fluent and effortless as a native speaker. Can paraphrase and summarize correctly the essence of a standard newspaper item or a multi-paragraph essay.	Has few traces of a foreign accent.

*For example: Name, National Origin, Home Environment, Telling Time, Parts of the Body, Going to the Doctor, Money and Shopping, Leisure Activities.

**For example: Getting to School, Comparing United States and Their Native Country, Student Government Elections, A Car Accident, A Job Interview, Social Situations Eliciting Sympathy, Courtesy or Persuasion.

***Addressing a topic of interest to teen agers or school-related subjects.

SAMPLE

Appendix F

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPAC

Dade County Public Schools
Office of Educational Acccuntability

TWELFTH GRADE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENT
ORAL PROFICIENCY TESTING

STUDENT ASSESSMENT OF ORAL TEST

School Name _____ 2 - 5

Based on the experience of taking the Oral Test of English Proficiency, please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements. Look at the scale below, select the appropriate number and write the number to the right of each statement.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

SAMPLE

1. The Oral Testing experience was:

   a. comfortable _____ 6
   b. difficult _____ 7
   c. distressing _____ 8
   d. fun _____ 9
   e. pleasant _____ 10
   f. too easy _____ 11
   g. interesting _____ 12

2. I learned a lot from it. _____ 13

3. It increased my confidence in the English language. _____ 14

4. I like this kind of test. _____ 15

5. Comment in a sentence or two on how you felt about this kind of testing experience. (Use your native language if you like.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

OEA: 7/11/84
SURVEY:sh Oral Test Assessment/Student

Appendix G

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPAC

Dade County Public Schools
Office of Educational Accountability

TWELFTH GRADE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENT
ORAL PROFICIENCY TESTING

ESOL TEACHER (TESTER) ASSESSMENT OF ORAL TEST/TRAINING

Your reactions and feedback as an ESOL teacher and tester will help us improve oral testing procedures of limited English proficient students. Based on the experience of training and administering the Oral Test, B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement, please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements. Select the appropriate number from the scale given below and write the number to the right of each statement.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

1. The training for administering the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement Oral Test

   a. explained the purpose of the Twelfth Grade LEP Student Testing clearly. ____ 2

   b. explained the test clearly. ____ 3

   c. explained scoring procedures clearly. ____ 4

   d. provided sufficient examples of student' responses. ____ 5

   e. provided sufficient practice in administering and scoring the test. ____ 6

   f. provided useful materials for administering and scoring the test ____ 7

   g. increased my abilities in administering and scoring English oral proficiency. ____ 8

Please comment in a sentence or two on each of the following questions. (Use the back of the this page or additional paper if necessary.

2. What problems did you have in <u>administering</u> the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement?

_____

_____

_____

_____

SAMPLE

3. What problems did you have in scoring the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement?

4. How do you feel about using the B.E.S.T. Plus Supplement as a measure of oral proficiency?

5. What recommendations would you make for improving each of the following?

Training in administering the oral tests

SAMPLE

The B.E.S.T.

The Oral Supplement

OEA: 4/4/84
SURVEY:sh Tchr Assessment/Oral Test

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA ADHERES TO A POLICY OF NONDISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES AND STRIVES AFFIRMATIVELY TO PROVIDE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL AS REQUIRED BY:

TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 - PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, OR NATIONAL ORIGIN.

TITLE VII OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964, AS AMENDED - PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, OR NATIONAL ORIGIN.

TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972 - PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX.

AGE DISCRIMINATION ACT OF 1967, AS AMENDED - PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF AGE BETWEEN 40 AND 70.

SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 - PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE HANDICAPPED.

VETERANS ARE PROVIDED RE-EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH P.L. 93-508 (FEDERAL) AND FLORIDA STATE LAW, CHAPTER 77-422, WHICH ALSO STIPULATES CATEGORICAL PREFERENCES FOR EMPLOYMENT.